

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 00321 020802Z
ACTION EA-12

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SS-15 USIA-06 CU-04 /075 W
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R 020707Z FEB 78
FM USLO PEKING
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9812
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0321

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: CH UR
SUBJ: SOVIET EMBASSY LINE ON SINKIANG, SAIFUDIN'S OUSTER

1. THE SOVIET EMBASSY IS ONCE AGAIN RETAILING RUMORS OF TROUBLE IN CHINA'S BORDER PROVINCES. IN CONVERSATION FEBRUARY 2 WITH USLO OFFICER, SOVIET EMBOFF KONDRATENKO SAID HIS EMBASSY FELT SAIFUDIN'S OUSTER FROM THE LEADERSHIP OF SINKIANG WAS DUE LESS TO HIS TIES WITH THE GANG OF FOUR THAN TO HIS INABILITY TO HANDLE THE NATIONAL MINORITY PROBLEM. HE SAID THAT THE PRC LAST SUMMER HAD STEPPED UP ITS CAMPAIGN TO MOVE TROUBLESOME MINORITY (MAINLY KAZAKH) HERDSMEN AWAY FROM THE SOVIET BORDER AND REPLACE THEM WITH HAN CHINESE SETTLERS. THIS HAS ONCE AGAIN STIRRED UP RESENTMENT AMONG THE TRIBESMEN, WHICH LED EVENTUALLY TO SAIFUDIN'S FALL.

2. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOVIET COUNSELOR KRASHENINNIKOV COMMENTED TO A USLO OFFICER THAT, BASED ON HIS PREVIOUS CONFIDENTIAL

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EXPERIENCE IN SINKIANG (AS SOVIET CONSUL IN URUMCHI) SAIFUDIN WOULD FIT WELL IN EITHER THE "SLIPPERY" OR THE "WIND" FACTIONS RECENTLY DENOUNCED IN THE LIBERATION ARMY DAILY. SAIFUDIN WAS NOT ONLY SHIFTY AND SLIPPERY, THOUGH, HE WAS ALSO RUTHLESS. IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO FIND ANOTHER UIGHUR LEADER WHO HAD SURVIVED BOTH THE TURBULENT POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

OF SINKIANG AND SAIFUDIN'S CAREFUL ELIMINATION OF RIVALS.
DEAN

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